

**Performing the Urban: Embodiments, Inventories, Rhythms**  
**University of Oviedo, Spain, 3-7 April 2017**

The rapid and continued growth of cities in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has intensified academic interest in the urban, as material reality and as imaginary or symbolic construction. A postcolonial perspective on the theory and practice of the urban expands Eurocentric notions to include different ways of inhabiting, performing or embodying a variety of cities, while dissecting neo-colonial and decolonial gestures of urbanization and of representation. In a globalised world in which the network economy appears to be intrinsically connected to the urban, postcolonial studies also invite us to decentre this dominant narrative by examining the margins and limits of the urban, or indeed non-urban spaces in which other ways of being and dwelling exist or may emerge.

High levels of mobility currently typify urban space. Cities have become places of encounter *par excellence*, bringing strangers together in spaces of embodied proximity, containing opportunities for both inclusion and exclusion of difference. The various forms of globalization have brought about a movement of persons across national borders, most often leading to city dwelling and a diverse experience and performance of the urban. In this context, and in the different specific locations and historical circumstances that characterize the post-colonial, how do individuals or collectives appropriate and perform urban space? Amid the new technologies and shifting geopolitical maps of the present century, how are urban communities imagined and performed? In times of perceived insecurity, are the urban capabilities described by Saskia Sassen being weakened by fear or by the power of the nation-state? How are urbanites contesting these sweeping narratives and other hegemonic ideologies affecting the contemporary post-colonial world? How is the urban performed emotionally?

This conference is an invitation to rethink, research and discuss the urban (and the counter-urban) as performance and construction, and to do so from a variety of disciplinary approaches, theoretical perspectives and creative productions.

Papers are invited on topics under the following headings:

- Performing the urban: enactments of the urban, rhythms, social patterns, identities, subjectivities, imaginaries.
- Performance as an urban practice: urban spectacles, audiences; agents, choreographers of the urban; the urban space as stage. Urban drama, comedy, art.

- Changing performances: resisting the urban; sustainable cities; eco-urbanity.
- Embodied urban encounters: living urban contact; post/trans/human bodies; transcultural exchange. Intersections, cross-overs.
- Bodily performances: art, politics, leisure; street-dwelling.
- Urban inventories: structural, architectural, archival, museums.
- Urban rhythms and historical rhythms: changes in the perception and enactment of cities. Post/colonial shifts (wars, fears, occupation, liberation).
- Emotional performances of the urban.
- Writing the city: urban literature, the global city as post/colonial text.

## **Proposals**

**Deadline: 15 November 2016**

Reply on acceptance by 15 December 2016

We invite contributions for 20-minute papers or 90-minute panels addressing the conference topic.

Please send a 300-word abstract for individual papers or 450-word abstract for panels, accompanied by a short bio-note of all speakers (100-150 words) and 5-6 keywords, to: [eaclals.oviedo@gmail.com](mailto:eaclals.oviedo@gmail.com).

**Or through the conference website at:**

<http://www.eaclals-oviedo17.com/en/proposals.php>

### **Confirmed keynote speakers, writers, performers:**

**Ien Ang, Western Sydney University**  
**Javier Bauluz, Pulitzer Prize photojournalist**  
**Amanda Coogan, Performer**  
**Angie Cruz, University of Pittsburgh**  
**Helen Gilbert, Royal Holloway University**  
**Ananya Jahanara Kabir, University College London**  
**Ramón Grosfoguel, UC Berkeley**  
**Simone Lazaroo, Murdoch University**  
**Belén Martín-Lucas, University of Vigo**  
**Alecia McKenzie, Writer, Performer**  
**Manjula Padmanabhan, Author, artist**  
**Aritha van Herk, University of Calgary (Anna Rutherford Lecture)**

**Further confirmations pending**

**Organisers**

The conference will take place at the University of Oviedo, organized by the research group Intersecciones (Intersections), with a long history of work in Postcolonial Studies. Oviedo held the Silver Jubilee EACLALS Triennial Conference, *Translating Cultures*, in 1996, which paid special homage to EACLALS founder Anna Rutherford, with Hena Maes-Jelinek presenting her with the festschrift *A Talent(ed) Digger*. The conference had Gayatri Spivak and Robert Kroetsch as keynote speakers, and brought together writers Shashi Deshpande, Hiromi Goto, Elizabeth Jolley, Alecia MacKenzie, Mrinal Pande, Velma Pollard, Aritha van Herk and Rudy Wiebe, as well as 350 participants. *Performing the Urban* will build on the strength of this past experience and on the energy of a young group of scholars who are part of the consolidated team working on postcolonialism, cities and gender, and who look forward to receiving participants in Oviedo.

### **The city and the University**

Located in the North of Spain, and although relatively peripheral to the network of global cities and economic hubs in Europe, Oviedo is affected by the flows of transnational capital, and particularly well-suited to hosting a conference that focuses on the configuration of alternative urban performances. Its attractive historic centre is mostly pedestrian and invites walking, exploration and convivial meetings. Its location in the region of Asturias, between the sea and an imposing range of mountains (the Cordillera Cantábrica, with its alpine-style Picos de Europa), allows post-conference delving into remarkable landscape and local living.

The University of Oviedo, which celebrated its 400 anniversary in 2008, is one of the oldest and most prestigious Higher Education institutions in Spain. Offering a full range of degrees in all areas of knowledge and a strong postgraduate and research programme, it combines close attention to the region of Asturias with a firmly international outlook, which encourages the open exchange of knowledge and welcomes international conferences.